English-Medium Instruction Practices in Higher Education: International Perspectives
Edited by Jim McKinley and Nicola Galloway (2022)

Reviewed by Peter Wingrove

English-Medium Instruction Practices in Higher Education: International Perspectives provides a timely and important contribution to the growing field of EMI research. The book is divided into three sections that cover macro-analysis (national or regional level), meso-analysis (institutional level) and micro-analysis (classroom level). There are twenty-one chapters in total, with seven chapters allocated to each level of analysis. The chapters cover a wide range of international contexts, including countries in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

The macro level chapters focus on national-level EMI policies and the government-led implementation of EMI. These chapters cover Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Denmark, Ethiopia, Nepal and Turkey. The diversity in chapter contexts provides interesting contrasts between systems. For example, we see contexts where EMI is associated with (post-)colonial rule in Bangladesh and Nepal; EMI in Ethiopia, which was never colonised; EMI as an explicit policy goal in China; EMI as an unintended consequence of governance reforms in Denmark; partial EMI in Turkey; and EMI as a ‘fashion accessory’ in Brazil. While the countries vary in terms of linguistic backgrounds, history, culture and governance, it is interesting to see how EMI appears to be inevitable across contexts, although the exact manifestation varies.

The meso-level chapters focus on the institutions themselves. This includes institutional level EMI in Austria, Colombia, Estonia, Italy,
Poland, South Africa and Vietnam. These chapters cover the various ways institutions and participants, such as senior managers and programme coordinators, have responded to global changes and macro-level policies in implementing EMI across contexts. This includes the perspectives of lecturers in Italy and the perspectives students in Poland; how institutions have responded to government legislation in their implementation of EMI in Austria, Colombia and Vietnam; an argument for the inclusion of African languages alongside English in South Africa; and an interesting chapter on language debates in Estonian higher education.

The micro-level chapters focus on classroom-level EMI covering the South Caucasus, Hong Kong, Japan, Kuwait, Mexico, the Netherlands and Tunisia. Within these chapters a range of micro-level topics is covered, including student perspectives in the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) and Japan; translanguaging and semiotic resources in Hong Kong; the effectiveness of an immersive pre-sessional course in Mexico; student comprehension in Kuwait; the glocalisation of EMI in higher education in the Netherlands; and a forward looking chapter on life after EMI for students entering the job market in Tunisia, which is primarily conducted in Arabic and French. Although outside the remit of the book, it is worth noting that micro-level analysis in these chapters does not directly investigate language itself, instead focusing on student experiences, perspectives and comprehension.

The book can truly claim to be international, covering countries in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. Featuring a range of international contexts, which demonstrate global variation in EMI, is one of the strongest contributions of the book. Researchers and practitioners interested in how EMI differs, or stays the same, between global contexts will surely be interested in the current volume. This includes the challenges and opportunities that EMI presents between contexts and the various methods that researchers have used to investigate EMI from different angles.

Organising the book into macro, meso and micro levels enables the book to cover many distinct aspects of EMI in a systemic way. It is interesting to see how decisions at the government level affect institutions, which trickle down to classrooms, students and language practices. While the book is divided into three sections (macro, meso and micro), the chapters inevitably blur the boundaries between them due to the complexity of interactions between levels. Perhaps one limitation of the choice to cast a wide international net across macro, meso and micro levels is that breadth in coverage is traded-off for depth. In this sense, the book excels at giving overviews of EMI in many different contexts, with each chapter functioning as a mini
study, rather than the book focusing on any one context or aspect of EMI in depth.

The book also points out the challenges facing EMI researchers and hopes to foster interdisciplinary research on this growing global phenomenon. The book therefore provides a solid overview of EMI worldwide, useful for those currently working in the field or those from other disciplines seeking to venture into EMI research.